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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 8255
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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

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NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Iran
- [1](#)2. Mideast
- [1](#)3. US-Israel Relations

Key stories in the media:

All media reported that on Thursday Defense Minister Ehud Barak approved economic sanctions on the Gaza Strip in response to continued Qassam rocket attacks. This will include cuts in the electrical supply, however essential institutions such as hospitals, will not be affected. Barak's approval is conditioned on legal authorization from Attorney General Menachem Mazuz and from the Military Advocate General. The Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli defense officials told the newspaper that the IDF plan is the first step toward a "complete disengagement." Avi Issacharoff and Amos Harel of Ha'aretz gave a similar assessment.

Ha'aretz quoted FM Tzipi Livni as saying on Thursday, during her meeting with US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley -- who also met PM Ehud Olmert and PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas -- that the implementation of future agreements with the Palestinians must be conditioned by the Roadmap. Israel Radio quoted PM Olmert as saying that the Annapolis meeting is supposed to lay the foundations for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Ha'aretz also reported that today Livni will for the first time take part in a meeting between Olmert and Chairman Abbas.

Leading media reported that on Thursday the US administration introduced new sanctions on Iran, designed to isolate it from the world economy. The new measures designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics proliferators of ballistic missile technology, and the Quds Force off-shoot of the IRGC a terrorist organization. Noting that the step was liable to hit foreign firms, The Jerusalem Post reported that the Israeli Foreign Ministry welcomed the US decision, saying it represented "an important contribution through international means to pressure Iran to abandon its nuclear program." The Jerusalem Post quoted a senior official in the Prime Minister's Office as saying: "We totally and absolutely back and support it, and hope other countries will take similar steps." Ha'aretz reported that visiting senior Russian Foreign Ministry officials told Israel that Russia would like Israel to send Syria "positive signals" in order to encourage it to end its alliance with Iran. The Russians also presented their assessment that Iran is nowhere near acquiring nuclear weapons.

Major media reported that new satellite pictures reveal that Syria recently razed all buildings at the suspected site of Israel's September 6 strike. Yediot banners: "The Reactor Was Erased." The pictures were analyzed by David Albright, a former UN weapons inspector now working at the Institute for Science and International Security. The Syrians "are clearly trying to conceal evidence," he was quoted as saying. Yediot quoted Turkish media as saying that PM Olmert promised Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan that Israel will soon make a public announcement regarding the September 6 event. Meanwhile, the IDF on Thursday canceled part of a major exercise scheduled for next week in the Golan, to avoid raising tensions with Syria. The exercise will be limited to the Galilee.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel is upset about comments made by Abbas to Al-Arabiya-TV that Israeli and Hamas representatives have been secretly meeting to discuss ending Israel's "siege" of Gaza, including its ban on exports.

Leading media reported that three armed Palestinians were killed in two clashes with the IDF in the Gaza Strip. Two IDF soldiers were lightly wounded. On Friday the electronic media reported on further fighting in the Gaza Strip.

Ha'aretz reported that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, is expected to visit Israel next week for meetings with the chief rabbis. The newspaper noted that he blasted Israel's security policy on previous visits, although he is reportedly committed to Israel's existence and good relations between Jews and Anglicans. In another development, Ha'aretz reported that the Interior Ministry recently canceled all reentry visas for Christian Arab religious travelers who wish to travel in and out of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The newspaper quoted the ministry as saying on Thursday that security officials had requested the rescindment.

The Jerusalem Post quoted the organization Gisha - the Legal Center for Freedom of Movement - as saying on Thursday that the army has

broken a promise given to the High Court of Justice to renew bus service for Gaza students to Egypt so that they can pursue their academic studies abroad.

Yediot reported that the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades are making use of aerial photographs displayed on the Google Earth site to orient Qassam rockets.

Leading media reported that PM Olmert's Chief of Staff, Yoram Turbowicz, testified before the Winograd Commission that Olmert was aware from the beginning that by hitting back hard at Hizbullah for abducting IDF soldiers, he would be exposing the home front to rocket attacks.

Ha'aretz reported that TIME Magazine declared Israeli Benjamin Kahn, the founder of the environmental group Zalul, to be one of its "Heroes of the Environment" for 2007.

I1. Iran:

Summary:

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "There is no reason to suspect the US administration does not mean what it says: Sanctions are the tool of choice, with the hope that they will push Iran into recognizing that if it does not give in, the US will crush its economy."

Ha'aretz editorialized: "Those who prevent economic pressure on Iran are making the use of military force against it more likely."

Block Quotes:

II. "A Signal to Iran and the Global Community"

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (10/26): "Washington's belligerent tone has some of its more suspicious friends warning of an impending military attack. But talk of a military option is at this stage a mere diversion from the gray reality of sanctions. There is no reason to suspect the US administration does not mean what it says: Sanctions are the tool of choice, with the hope that they will push Iran into recognizing that if it does not give in, the US will crush its economy.... [Secretary of State Condoleezza] Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates, considered the administration's 'moderates,'

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are harsh realists. They support negotiations, but from a position of strength. On Thursday they sought to demonstrate this strength and hurt Iran through tough, but non-military, means."

II. "Sanctions or Force"

Ha'aretz editorialized (10/26): "French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown espoused a determined and coordinated position on the need to stop Iran's nuclear program during Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's visits to their countries last week.... Against the background of a noticeable toughening of the rhetoric against Iran by senior American government officials, Sarkozy and Brown are seeking to give diplomacy another chance and to exert 'soft power.' The challenge they face is to persuade two other key European states -- Germany and Italy -- to join the French sanctions initiative and cut back on their booming business with Iran.... The position adopted by sanction opponents is liable to achieve the opposite of what they intend: Those who prevent economic pressure on Iran are making the use of military force against it more likely. If there is still any chance for the diplomatic effort to succeed, as Olmert says, it must not be missed because of short-sighted business considerations. This is the moment for Europe to display unity and leadership and to prove that its way can achieve results in solving the 'most important international issue,' as Sarkozy termed it."

12. Mideast:

Summary:

Editor-in-Chief David Horovitz wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Do I think Abbas is going to seize the moment -- to tell his own people where their true interests lie? I do not."

Block Quotes:

"Abbas's Opportunity"

Editor-in-Chief David Horovitz wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (10/26): "We've heard many fine words over the years... Nonetheless, [Mahmoud] Abbas would serve four sets of interests -- Palestinian, Israeli, moderate regional, and global -- if he severed the line from Arafat, defied Hamas and his own radicals by urging international assistance in the battle against terrorism, and issued an unequivocal public rejection of the refugee 'right of return' and an endorsement of Jewish Israel as the first step toward reviving a peace process.... A win-win-win-win situation, though pregnant with personal risk. Do I think Abbas is going to seize the moment -- to tell his own people where their true interests lie? I do not. Whether or not he has the inclination, I don't think he has the guts. I hope he'll prove me wrong."

13. US-Israel Relations:

Summary:

Columnist and Law Professor, and former cabinet minister Amnon Rubinstein, who currently teaches at Columbia University, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "There indeed can be no apology for Walt and Mearsheimer's book, which is impregnated with lies. One would be truly hard-pressed to believe that so soon after the extermination of European Jewry, such generalizing accusations would be uttered against the Jews."

Block Quotes:

"It Is Hard to Be a Jew"

Columnist and Law Professor, and former cabinet minister Amnon Rubinstein, who currently teaches at Columbia University, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/26): "Pre-Holocaust anti-Semites should be judged according to the gravity of their lies. Today's readers of Richard Wagner, Henry Ford, Austin Chamberlain, and their peers will view them as harbingers of the Holocaust. However, it should be assumed that they did not know where hatred of the Jews would lead to. Conversely, today, when the entire world is aware of this, the return to incitement is considerably worse. There indeed can be no apology for Walt and Mearsheimer's book, which is impregnated with lies. One would be truly hard-pressed to believe that so soon after the extermination of European Jewry, such generalizing accusations would be uttered against the Jews."

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